

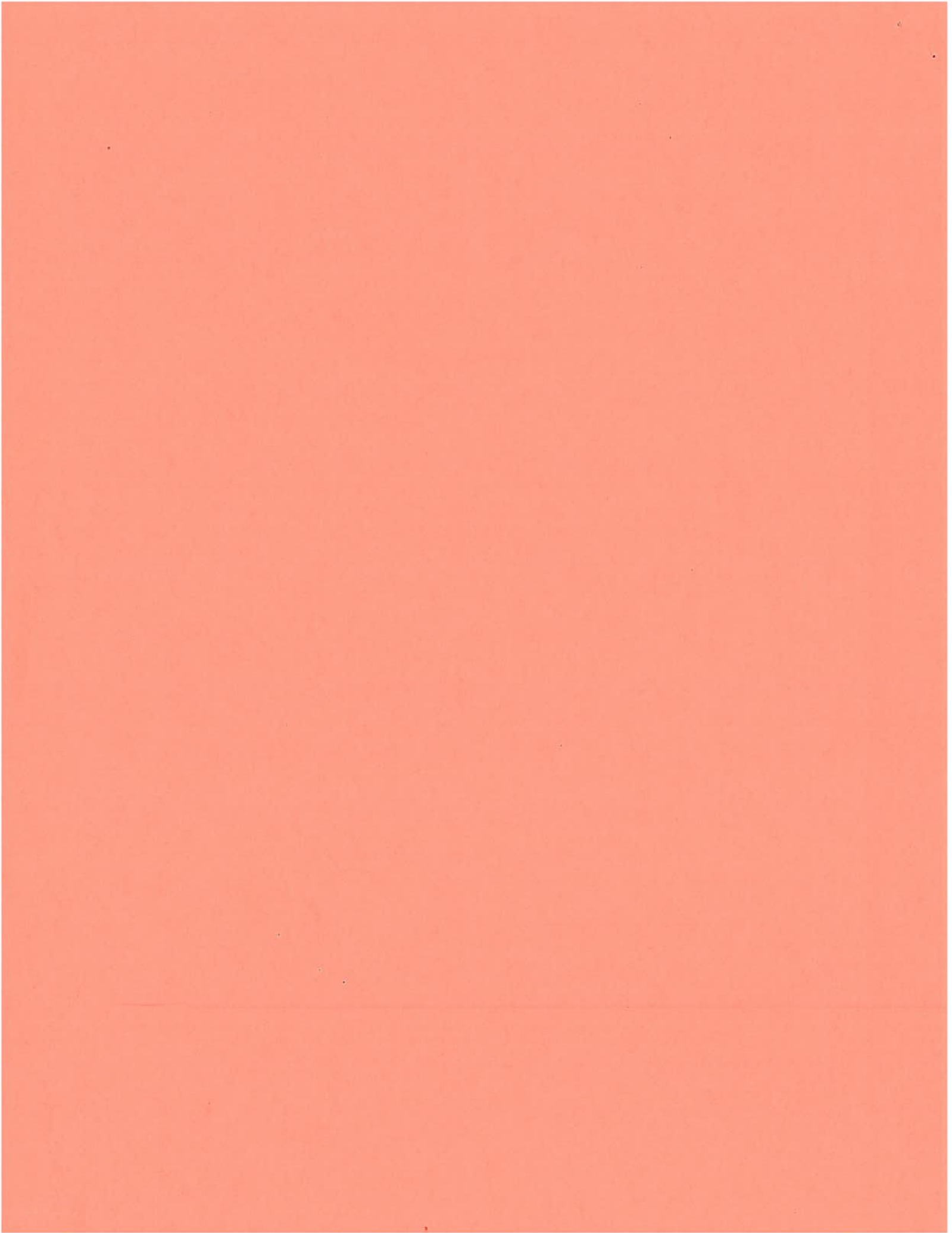
ATTACHMENT A

**GUIDELINES**

**for**

**COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANS**

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
March 2000**



# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. Intent of these Guidelines**

In 1988, the State legislature passed Assembly Bill 3705 (Eastin), authorizing Bay Area counties, along with the cities and transit operators, to develop Countywide Transportation Plans on a voluntary basis. The provisions in AB 3705 are codified in Section 66531 of the California Government Code, and were modified by the passage of AB 1619 (Lee) (Statutes of 1994, Chapter 25). Among other things, the law specifies: the relationship between Countywide Plans and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the relationship between Countywide Plans and Congestion Management Programs (CMPs), and specific considerations to be addressed in Countywide Plans.

The law directed the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to “develop guidelines to be used in the preparation of county transportation plans.” MTC produced an original set of guidelines for Countywide Plans in 1989, after AB 3705 was passed. MTC revised these Guidelines in 1995, primarily to reflect new legislation at the Federal and State levels.

MTC is again revising and updating these Guidelines, principally to reflect the passage of new legislation at both the Federal and State levels, specifically the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21) and SB 45 (Statutes 1997 Chapter 622), respectively.

The intent of the countywide transportation plan guidelines is to:

- Strengthen the relationship between Countywide Plans and the RTP;
- Encourage the compatibility of the countywide plans with those of adjoining counties; and
- Promote implementation of TEA 21.

## **B. Legislative Mandate for the Countywide Plans and Guidelines**

Government Code Section 66531 and revisions in AB 1619 allow for preparation of Countywide Plans within every county in the MTC region by the agency responsible for developing, adopting and updating the CMP (unless, by January 1, 1995, another agency was designated by the county board of supervisors and the city councils). The plans must be developed with participation from the cities and transit operators within the county, and may be updated every two years.

State law calls for Countywide Plans to be the “primary basis” for the RTP, and states that MTC shall add proposals and policies of regional significance to the RTP. The law also states that MTC may use the RTP to resolve conflicts between different counties’ plans.

Government Code Section 66531(c) requires MTC, in consultation with local agencies, to adopt revised guidelines for the Countywide Plans which are consistent with the preparation of the RTP.

## **C. Countywide Plan Opportunities**



Countywide Plans can establish a county's long-range transportation vision and goals. This long-range transportation planning context is increasingly important given the complexity of the transportation system in the Bay Area. Second, strategies and investment priorities can be crafted to help achieve the Plan's goals. Countywide Plans also serve as input to MTC's 20 year RTP, which explicitly addresses regional priorities and funding constraints.

Countywide Plans can be particularly effective if they:

- Establish a transportation policy context;
- Provide a focal point for integrating city, county and regional level transportation plans; and
- Prioritize transportation investments for consideration in the RTP development process.

## **II. COUNTYWIDE PLANS AND THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)**

State law created an inter-dependent relationship between Countywide Plans and the RTP. While Countywide Plans must consider the most recently adopted RTP, they are also to serve as the primary basis for the RTP. These Countywide Plan guidelines must also be "consistent with the Commission's preparation of the RTP". These requirements ensure that Countywide Plans and the RTP employ a common planning framework, even though the plans differ in scope. The following two sections outline RTP elements which should be considered in Countywide Plans.

### **A. RTP Elements Which Should be Considered in Countywide Plans**

Legal requirements for the RTP are established by State law (Govt. Code Sec. 66500 et seq., & Sec. 65080) and Federal law (Title 23, U.S.C., Sec. 134 et. seq.).

Under state law, the RTP must address three "elements." Countywide plans should also address these elements in an appropriate way.

- 1) **Policy Element** - identifies the long range goals, policies and objectives. The five interrelated RTP goals of mobility, economic vitality, community vitality, sensitivity to the environment, and promotion of equity should be recognized, as well as the regional priority to maintain and operate the existing transportation system.
- 2) **Financial Element** -projects the cost to operate and maintain the existing transportation system; estimates reasonably available revenues for transportation over the next 20 years.

The RTP Track 1 estimates should be incorporated into the Countywide Plans. Counties should also include other local sources of funds (development impact or sub regional fees) to the extent they are known. Countywide Plans may also include estimates of future revenues from new sources that require voter or Legislative action



(similar to the RTP "Track 2" revenues).

- 3) **Action Element** - outlines an investment strategy based on funding levels as indicated above for the 20 year period, including the maintenance, operation, and expansion of the system. As allowed in TEA 21, the RTP also includes, for illustrative purposes, additional projects that would be included if reasonable additional resources were available (i.e., "Track 2").

The RTP is also developed in accordance with federal metropolitan planning requirements, including the following considerations:

- TEA 21 planning factors (see Appendix A);
- Integrated management and operation of an intermodal system, including bicycle/pedestrian facilities;
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Architecture;
- Transportation Control Measures to attain and maintain federal air quality standards; federal air quality "conformity" requirements for the RTP;
- Americans with Disabilities Act planning;
- Consideration of the Presidential Executive Order on Environmental Justice; and
- A public participation process to provide the broader public with an opportunity to comment on the proposed Plan.

These federal RTP requirements may be considered in preparing countywide plans.

## **B. Countywide Plans as the Primary Basis for the RTP**

Countywide Plans can best inform the RTP if both plans use a common set of planning assumptions. The most important are:

- Demographic projections and transportation modeling methodologies that are consistent with those used in the RTP.
- Revenue estimates for State (STIP) and Federal (STP/CMAQ) revenue that are consistent with those used in the RTP.
- Costs for maintenance and operations of the existing system, including the following categories: transit capital rehabilitation and operations, and local street pavement and non-pavement.
- Inclusion of MTC's Regional Customer Service Programs.

In developing the Countywide Plans, use of a corridor planning framework, as detailed in the RTP and applied through the Corridor Management Plans, should be considered.

Situations may occur where local and regional priorities can not be fully accommodated within a financially constrained RTP investment strategy, where there are conflicts between strategies in different counties, or where regional and local policy are not in complete concurrence. Because State law does not prescribe a course to follow in such situations, they must be resolved through the planning process. This process is best supported by early and continuous consultation between MTC and the CMAs (or other designated agency responsible for developing the Countywide Plan).

### **III. COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN CONTENT**

Countywide plans should consider highways, arterials, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities as integral parts of a single transportation system for moving people and freight, and develop strategies for its optimum performance. At the regional level, MTC has defined a Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS) as the focus of planning and system management efforts.

Under existing legislation, Countywide Plans may include, but are not limited to, the following content areas (original text from the legislation is in bold underlined italics):



**A. Investments to Sustain MTS Effectiveness and Efficiency**  
**Recommendations for investments necessary to sustain the effectiveness and efficiency of the county portion of the Metropolitan Transportation System, as defined cooperatively by the Commission and the agency;** (Section 66531(c)(1))

**MTC Suggestions:**

- MTC has identified the MTS within each county. The current MTS should be identified in the Countywide Plan, along with any proposed future additions (optional).
- The Plan should indicate the cumulative shortfall for maintaining and operating transit systems and local streets within the county, both MTS and non-MTS. MTC will provide updated financial information as part of the preparation of the RTP.
- System Performance Measures (optional)  
System performance measures may be included. These may be the same as those in the Performance Element of the CMP, or may include other measures, such as those evaluated in MTC's Environmental Impact Report for the RTP.
- Corridor and Other Studies  
Countywide Plans should summarize the results of recently completed corridor studies and relevant recommendations, and identify ongoing studies.

**B. Transportation System and Demand Management**  
**Consideration of transportation system and demand management strategies which reinforce the requirements contained in Section 65089** (i.e., the CMP statutes); (Section 66531(c)(2))

**MTC Suggestions:**

- Include descriptions of the relevant Corridor Management Plans and Corridor Management Objectives (prepared as a basis for receiving certain flexible TEA 21 funds).
- Include descriptions of MTC Regional Customer Service Programs, including TransLink® , TravInfo™ , Traffic Operations System (TOS), Traveler Information, Welfare to Work, Ridesharing, Signal Coordination, Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC), etc. that are relevant in the county. Descriptions of these programs are available from MTC.

**C. Transportation Impacts of Land Use**  
**Consideration of transportation impacts associated with land use designations embodied in the general plans of the county and cities within the county and projections of economic and population growth available from the Association of Bay Area Governments.** (Section 66531(c)(3))

**MTC Suggestions:**

- In order to provide consistency with the RTP, and with major corridor studies



undertaken in each county, the countywide plan should evaluate transportation system performance using the most recent Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) demographic projections.

- Additionally, as provided for in the statutes, the Countywide Plan may analyze transportation performance of the Plan based on current land use designations embodied in the general plans of the county and the cities within the county.

MTC anticipates still other alternative land use options may be of interest to local policy makers. Alternative land use assumptions should be developed with recognition of current land use conditions, local land use plans and accompanying regulations.

- Should the CMA or agency with similar authority decide to adopt a plan based upon a preferred alternative land use / demographic projection that differs significantly from ABAG's projections, the Countywide Plans should indicate:
  - the basis for a divergence from the ABAG projections, and
  - the implications on Countywide and RTP transportation investment priorities of the alternative land use assumptions.
- MTC encourages local agencies to review their general plans to consider ways to coordinate the general plans with desired transportation investments.

#### **D. Transportation System Capacity Conservation Strategies**

**Consideration of strategies that conserve existing transportation system capacity, such as pricing policies or long-term land use and transportation integration policies jointly developed by the commission and the agencies designated pursuant to Section 65089 (i.e., the CMAs) (Section 66531(c)(4))**

Transportation system capacity conservation strategies are intended to preserve the most capacity from the existing facilities.

##### **MTC Suggestions:**

- Corridor studies should consider system management opportunities (incident management, Caltrans Traffic Operation Systems (TOS), signal coordination, traveler information, transit coordination, ridesharing, etc.).
- Corridor and Countywide Plans should consider Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) opportunities.
- Certain corridors may consider "Value Pricing" of new facilities as a management option.

#### **E. Financial Considerations**

**Consideration of expected transportation revenues as estimated by the commission, the impact of these estimated revenues on investment recommendations, and options for enhanced transportation revenues. (Section 66531(c)(5)) The County Transportation Plan shall include recommended transportation improvements for the succeeding 10-**



and 20-year periods. (Section 66531(e))

MTC Suggestions:

- Countywide Plans should consider the most recent MTC estimates for future State and Federal revenues. These estimates have historically been updated in conjunction with RTP updates.
- The Plan should provide estimates of current local revenues, such as those from existing local sales tax expenditure programs and local fee programs.
- The Countywide Plan should indicate the cost of projects in today's dollars. If future dollars are used, inflation factors from the RTP should be utilized.
- The Plan should indicate how federal/state/local revenues are assigned for each project.
- If the Plan includes a Track 2 component, it should identify the sources and amounts of new revenue assumed.

#### **IV. COUNTYWIDE PLAN PREPARATION AND SUBMITTAL TO MTC**

##### **A. Public Participation**

Development and adoption of Countywide Plans should include a broad and open public participation process, including outreach to any under-represented interests.

##### **B. Regional Coordination**

The Plan should be reviewed with the Partnership Planning and Operations Committee (PPOC). This would assist in identifying issues with the RTP, as well as with county plans in adjoining counties.

##### **C. Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

MTC's RTP is subject to CEQA review. In order for Countywide Plans to be the "primary basis" for the RTP, they too must undergo CEQA during their development.

##### **D. Submittal to MTC**

State law governing the RTP (Government Code 65080(c)) was recently changed, modifying the scheduling requirement for Regional Transportation Planning Agencies with urbanized areas to submit RTPs every three years, instead of the previously required every two years. Specifically, MTC will be required to submit an updated RTP to the California Transportation Commission and Caltrans every three years beginning by September 1, 2001. While MTC has not yet adopted a schedule for the next RTP, it is anticipated that draft RTPs will typically be circulated in early Spring, and final RTPs adopted in late Summer.

In order to maximize consistency between the RTP and Countywide Plans, it would be best for Countywide Plan development to slightly precede development of the RTP. Major

milestones for the RTP and Countywide Plans could be reviewed by the Partnership Plans and Operations Committee.